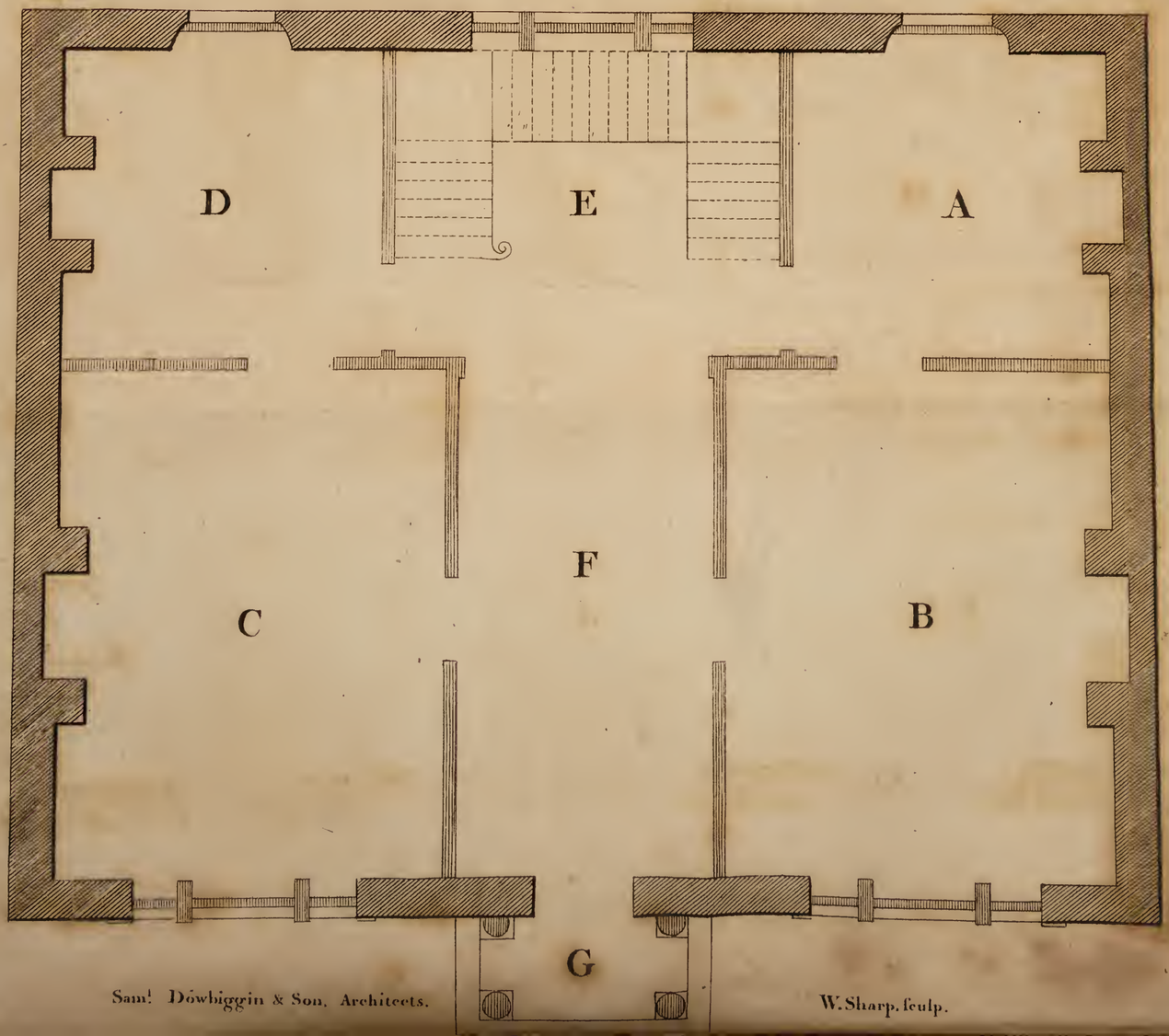


Elevation of the New Dispensary.



Sam! Dowbiggin & Son, Architects.

W. Sharp. sculp.

OF THE

IMPROVEMENT

OF

MEDICINE in LONDON,

ON THE

BASIS of PUBLIC GOOD.

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MEDICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON

By J. C. LETTSOM, M.D. F.R.S. and S.A.

MEMBER OF THE COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS, AND PHYSICIAN TO THE GENERAL DISPENSARY, LONDON.

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MDCCLXXV.

"Our doubts are traitors;
"And make us lose the good we oft might win,
"By fearing to attempt."

SHAKESPEARE.

TO

THE EARL OF DARTMOUTH, PRESIDENT;

SIR LYONEL LYDE, BART.
AND
THOMAS NASH, ESQ. } VICE PRESIDENTS;

JAMES JOHNSON, ESQ. TREASURER;

AND THE

GOVERNORS OF THE GENERAL DISPENSARY;

THE FOLLOWING WORK

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

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OF

OF THE

IMPROVEMENT

OF

MEDICINE.

SECTION I.

Plan and Design of the General Dispensary.

IT was the sentiment of an ancient Roman, that "no-thing brings men nearer the "Deity, than giving health "to their fellow creatures." The disposition to the relief of distress that prevails in this city, is a pleasing example of the influence of civilization, benevolence,

and piety; and the many hoſpitals, and other receptacles for almoſt every ſpecies of miſery, are proofs of genuine humanity, which no preceding age ever exhibited. But objects of compaſſion muſt ſtill prevail, as the human conſtitution is ſtill liable to pain and diſeaſe; and when pain and diſeaſe are united with poverty, they form a picture of human woe, that muſt naturally excite the pity, and engage the protection of thoſe, who have been exempted from ſuch accumulated miſery.

Theſe conſiderations firſt gave riſe to the GENERAL DISPENSARY, as an auxiliary to the hoſpitals in this metropolis, in order to adminiſter advice and medicines to the poor, not only at the Diſpenſary, but alſo at their own habitations; which latter circumſtance is an advantage peculiar to this plan. And, notwithſtanding the many excellent charities, already ſubſiſting for relief of the ſick in and about this great metropolis; yet, when it

is

is conſidered how many poor, from the nature of their circumſtances and diſorders, are ſtill neceſſarily confined to their wretched dwellings, and periſh through want of proper aſſiſtance, the utility of this inſtitution becomes obvious.

It is preſumed that this Charity will be particularly ſerviceable to ſuch poor labouring families, when viſited with illneſs, as have not the ability to aſſiſt themſelves, and yet are willing to exert their utmoſt endeavours for ſupport in ſickneſs as well as in health. What pleaſure muſt it, therefore, afford the benevolent and humane, to ſtep in, at this critical time of diſtreſs, to their aſſiſtance; and to be, under Providence, the happy inſtruments of relieving theſe poor objects from their various afflictions!

This Charity extends alſo to the diſeaſes of children; as it is too evident, that many of theſe, under a variety of ſlight maladies which affect their tender frames,

are, by neglect or improper treatment, totally loſt to the public ; or, if they ſurvive, are rendered uſeleſs if not burthenſome members of the community. It is a melancholy truth, that near half the number born in London die under two years of age.

The ſubſcription is fixed low, with a view to render the Charity more extenſive, and give the induſtrious poor an eaſy opportunity of obtaining recommendations from their benevolent neighbours, on the earlieſt attack of ſickneſs ; and thereby of receiving immediate help, before their diſeaſes have acquired that degree of violence, which indigence and delay muſt neceſſarily occaſion.

Under theſe peculiar advantages, the poor have a phyſician at their bedſide on the very day they apply for relief; inſtead of being baniſhed from their habitations, when languiſhing with ſickneſs, to bear the controul of alien nurſes, they are continued

tinued under the foſtering care of their own relations, by which love and gratitude are mutually excited, and family connexions more firmly eſtabliſhed; and while domeſtic happineſs is thus cultivated, the morals of ſo uſeful and numerous a claſs of the community are preſerved unaſſailed and untainted.

As ſuch an extenſive plan could not be immediately carried into execution in all the adjoining parts of this great metropolis, it was thought expedient to eſtabliſh the firſt Diſpenſary in the city of London, and to ſettle the limits of viſiting the ſick at their own habitations, for the preſent, within the liberties thereof.

The Diſpenſary is ſituated in Alderſgate-ſtreet, where a phyſician attends at eleven o'clock every day (Sundays excepted) to give advice to ſuch out-patients as ſhall come recommended, and to viſit the home-patients at the places of their abode, as the caſe may require.——By out-patients are meant

meant, ſuch as are able to attend the Diſpenſary; by home-patients, ſuch as are not able to attend.

Though home-patients are, for the preſent, ſuch only as live within the city and liberties of London; yet, out-patients are relieved without any reſtriction as to place of reſidence.

An apothecary conſtantly reſides at the Diſpenſary, to receive letters of recommendation, and compound and deliver out the medicines preſcribed by the phyſicians.

Chirurgical*, venereal, and lunatick caſes are not admitted, being the peculiar objects of other charities.

* Since this piece was ſent to the preſs, the committee have agreed to refer the admiſſion of ſurgery to the next general meeting, in conſequence of a motion made for that purpoſe by the author.

But

But as there are medical caſes, wherein chirurgical aſſiſtance is requiſite, a ſurgeon attends on ſuch occaſions.

No perſons are deemed objects of this charity, but ſuch as are really neceſſitous.

Each patient is admitted by a printed letter of recommendation, ſigned by a governor; and, when cured, returns thanks, that ſuch governor may be informed of his right to preſent another object.

A general meeting is held on the ſecond Wedneſday in March, June, September, and December, in every year, at which nine governors conſtitute a board.

A committee of fifteen governors (three of whom are a quorum) are choſen at the general meetings in June and December, and meet at the Diſpenſary on the laſt Wedneſday in every month; which committee is open for any governors who pleaſe to attend, and who are intitled to a vote

equally

equally with the gentlemen appointed thereon.

A medical committee is choſen annually, to inſpect the drugs uſed in the Diſpenſary.

Perſons ſubſcribing one guinea annually to the ſupport of this Charity, are governors during the continuance of their ſubſcriptions, and intitled to have one patient at a time upon the Diſpenſary liſt.

Governors ſubſcribing two guineas annually are intitled to have two patients upon the liſt.

A benefaction of ten guineas conſtitutes a governor for life, and admits two patients at a time upon the books.

Nobility, members of parliament, and ladies, ſubſcribing as above, may vote at all elections, by any governor appointed proxy in writing for that purpoſe.

Annual

Annual ſubſcribers, deſirous of being governors for life, may become ſuch, on paying within the year a further ſum, to make up not leſs than ten guineas in the whole.

SECTION II.

Progreſs of the Diſpenſary, and General Review of it's Plan and Deſign.

AT the commencement of the Diſpenſary, in the year 1770, it was circumſcribed to admit certain objects and diſeaſes only; but, in it's progreſs, the acceſſion of ſubſcribers, and the conſequent increaſe of it's income, have rendered many of thoſe reſtrictions both unneceſſary and improper. The governors have hitherto paid a laudable attention to every propoſal of improvement; they have lately admitted ſmall-pox patients, and domeſtic ſervants, when properly recommended, to receive the benefits of their contributions; they have elected a ſurgeon to attend medical caſes, wherein chirurgical aſſiſtance is requiſite; and as they ſeem thus diſpoſed to receive every repreſentation which tends to the convenience, intereſts, and general good of the poor, I

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am induced to lay before them ſuch propoſals, as, from an attentive conſideration of the finances of the Charity, and the miſeries of the poor, appear moſt calculated to promote the great ends of the inſtitution, Public Good.

The finances of the Diſpenſary, as well as the applications of the ſick, have gradually increaſed ſince it's firſt eſtabliſhment, which has induced the governors to inquire after a more ſpacious edifice for the purpoſe of conducting the buſineſs of it; the preſent, therefore, ſeems the moſt eligible opportunity for addreſſing them upon a ſubject now under their contemplation, and upon the methods moſt conducive to it's advantage and improvement; and if it ſhould appear that opening the Diſpenſary to ſurgery in general, and to every diſeaſed object that may apply for relief, properly recommended by a ſubſcriber, would form the broad baſis of public good, I doubt not but this addreſs will meet with that reception and ſupport,

which has hitherto been manifeſted upon other occaſions.

The governors at preſent do not amount to 1000; but as the increaſe, though gradual, has been great, there is the faireſt reaſon to conclude, that the number will ſoon be doubled. This, however, I ſhall take for granted, and proceed in my calculations upon ſuch a ſuppoſition; but whatever number of ſubſcribers be admitted, the proportional expences will nearly quadrate, and therefore no miſconſtruction can reſult from adopting two thouſand inſtead of the preſent number.

Not two years ago the governors of the Diſpenſary found the houſe firſt occupied for conducting the buſineſs of it too ſmall, they therefore took one more commodious; and this is now as much too little as the former had been two years before: hence it is hoped they will not pay too ſcrupulous a regard to economy, when they have found the public encouragement ſo much ſurpaſs their moſt ſanguine expectations.

expectations. For this reaſon I have offered a plan of a Diſpenſary furniſhed with baths, and proper apartments for every uſeful contingency, with an eſtimate of all the expences that are likely to accrue: and as there are many old buildings in Alderſgate-ſtreet, and in it's vicinity, the governors may execute whatever plan they are pleaſed to adopt; and, with ſuch opportunities and advantages, we may hope to ſee perſonal convenience, ſimple elegance, and public utility, at once united.

SECTION

SECTION III.

Of the Finances of the Diſpenſary.

IN the year 1774 this Charity was enabled to purchaſe five hundred pounds in the ſtocks, from the ſavings made in that and the preceding years ſince it's eſtabliſhment. At the period abovementioned, the gratuity to the two phyſicians was particularly agitated; and many of the governors were then of opinion, that their ſubſcriptions would barely anſwer the numerous applications of the ſick poor, which had been of late conſiderably augmented in proportion to the number of ſubſcribers, from the Charity being more generally known among the lower claſs of people; but, as the labor of the phyſicians appeared to have been very great, it was agreed to give each one hundred pounds for their ſervices during the laſt year.

In this city, where opulence is united with benevolence, it was not probable that an

an inſtitution ſo friendly to human nature, would be leſs regarded by the public than it had hitherto been; on the contrary, this genteel emolument given to the faculty, while it animated their application, rendered the poſt of phyſician to the Diſpenſary more conſpicuous, and more worthy the attention of phyſicians of character and reputation, and daily increaſed the generous contributions of the public: the applications of the ſick conſequently increaſed, in proportion; and this rendered it neceſſary to elect a third phyſician the ſame year.

The expence which the Charity ſuſtained by ſo juſt an attention to the faculty, ſeemed therefore amply compenſated by the reputation and additional ſubſcriptions procured by it; for in 1775 the governors amounted to upwards of eight hundred, and five hundred pounds more were laid out in the funds; ſo that the capital amounted to one thouſand pounds, beſides upwards of one hundred in the treaſurer's hands.

From

From this ſhort view it is evident, that the General Diſpenſary will never fail for want of ſubſcriptions, while the faculty are treated in ſuch a manner as will engage gentlemen of eminence to undertake the laborious offices of phyſicians and ſurgeons to it.

The progreſſive acceſſion of governors muſt ſoon augment the number as high as two thouſand. The Charity will then require three phyſicians and as many ſurgeons, whoſe ſalaries, with thoſe of the apothecary and aſſiſtants, are rated in the following eſtimate, which includes all other contingent expences.

	£
Three phyſicians and three ſurgeons	600
One apothecary	80
Two aſſiſtants, 40l. each	80
Secretary	40
Collector	100
Drugs, &c.	500
Houſe-rent	120
Miſcellaneous expences, coals, candles, &c.	100
	1620
2000 governors, at 1l. 1s. per annum, is	2100
Intereſt of 1000l. at 3 per cent. per ann. is	30
	£2130

The expences deducted from the income of the Charity will leave an annual ſurplus of five hundred and ten pounds, which, in a few years, muſt be ſufficient to enable the governors to erect a new building, and to extend the benefits of their inſtitution to more diſtant limits.

It may be objected, that ſome of the governors are ſubſcribers for life, and therefore no future ſubſcription can ariſe from them; but to balance this deficiency, as many gentlemen at leaſt ſubſcribe two guineas annually. To this we may add donations by will, which will ſoon augment the capital of this Diſpenſary, and preclude every doubt of want of finances to anſwer it's future exigencies.

With the revenue above-mentioned, the General Diſpenſary will annually afford relief to about twelve thouſand patients, which is nearly double to ſome hoſpitals in London, whoſe revenues are four times greater.

SECTION IV.

State of the Poor in the City of London.

THE poor are a large, as well as uſeful part of the community; they ſupply both the neceſſary and ornamental articles of life; they have, therefore, a juſt claim to the protection of the rich, whoſe intereſts muſt direct them to encourage the induſtrious in their employments, to frame laws for the maintenance of their rights, and to ſuccour them in the misfortunes to which they are unavoidably incident.

This mutual obligation between the rich and the poor, neither of whom could long ſubſiſt without the aid of the other, has in all ages formed the moſt natural and permanent ground of intercourſe between the different degrees of the people; the artizan always depending upon the affluent for employment, and the ſucceſs of the artizan being always neceſſary to the eaſe and convenience of the affluent. In

In a country where many individuals are enriched by commerce, and where all people are poſſeſſed of civil liberty, and the unreſtrained exerciſe of their faculties, the ornamental and neceſſary arts muſt unavoidably flouriſh: but, wherever many perſons are employed, labor muſt be cheap; the earnings, therefore, of the artizan, will ſeldom exceed his expences; and as many of theſe arts depend upon circumſtances changeable in their nature, multitudes muſt thereby be liable to ſuffer a temporary poverty.

However, whilſt health continues, the reſources which daily open to the induſtrious in a trading country, afford alſo a temporary ſubſiſtance to their families: but a long continuance of health is the lot of few. The poor, from the occaſional want of employment and wholeſome food, from expoſure to all changes of the weather, and from various other cauſes, are often viſited with ſickneſs, as well as with poverty; one, indeed, is conſequent

upon the other, and thereby they become the immediate objects of affiſtance. It is then peculiarly neceſſary that the hand of pity ſhould be extended to ſoften the pangs of a ſick bed, and to reſtore health and eaſe to the poor in affliction.

But affecting as the picture of poverty united with diſeaſe may appear, it ſerves to heighten our approbation of the generous and benevolent ſpirit, which every quarter of this city nobly exhibits; the numerous hoſpitals, and other munificent receptacles for our diſtreſſed fellow-creatures, are undeniable proofs of the piety, compaſſion, and liberality of the opulent, which no preceding age ever afforded. Greece had her exquiſite ſtatues, and Rome her public baths and edifices; but Chriſtianity hath raiſed monuments of compaſſion and beneficence, unknown both to ancient Greece and Rome.

In a free country, where the manners of the people are thus ſoftened and humanized,

and

and amongſt whom mutual intereſts muſt perpetually ſubſiſt, a ſpontaneous gratitude will naturally ariſe in the poor towards their benefactors, to repay by their induſtry thoſe obligations which their unavoidable ſickneſs had incurred; they not only meet their families with pleaſure, but they are animated to follow their daily labour with redoubled chearfulneſs and vigor.

I have been too intimately acquainted with the condition and manners of the poor, to want facts in ſupport of what I advance; if I err, it will be in not doing ſufficient juſtice to that induſtry and gratitude, which they exemplify in their general deportment. Thoſe, who form their judgment from a ſuperficial obſervation of a few intoxicated objects, who are found in the moſt frequented places, are much miſtaken with reſpect to the body of the laborious poor, who humbly ſeclude themſelves in miſerable courts and allies. Vice is barefaced, and boldly expoſes itſelf in the open ſtreets; but modeſt worth ſteals

from

from the public eye, and frequents the moſt ſolitary avenues: one vicious man, therefore, becomes more conſpicuous than a thouſand good men; and our concluſions cannot be juſt without being formed from the whole, both with reſpect to the lower as well as higher ſtations of life.

When I conſider the diſtreſſes of the indigent, I rather admire that the inſtances of their miſconduct ſhould be ſo rare: when they behold the affluence, eaſe, and indulgence of their ſuperiors; when, in ſpite of their utmoſt induſtry, they can with difficulty ſupport their families; and when ſickneſs and diſappointments ſupervene, it is not to be wondered at, if ſome expreſſions of diſcontent ſhould break forth amongſt them. But ſuch only can properly judge of theſe repinings, who have ſeen a whole family, that once experienced better days, confined to one chamber, and one ſolitary bed, with ſickneſs, with want, and a total incapacity to raiſe one penny; let ſuch try the experiment without

out murmuring, before they form a conclusion to the disadvantage of the sufferers.

During the last three years, I have attended nearly six thousand poor persons, into many of whose habitations I have entered, and been conversant with their sufferings, and their resignation under them; in both of which they have exceeded many of their fellow-creatures, whose lot has cast them in a superior station, and whose contentment under temporary miseries, should ever be sustained by this comparative reflexion:

"What myriads wish to be as blest as I!"

SHENSTONE.

Great cities are like painted sepulchres; their public avenues, and stately edifices, seem to preclude the very possibility of distress and poverty: but if we pass beyond this superficial veil, the scene will be reversed; the pleasing lights and shades of the picture will be blended with, and lost in a dark back-ground. A man,

A man, converſant only with the common concerns of life, would infer, upon the leaſt reflexion, that as families in the middle ſtation, with the utmoſt circumſpection, cannot reſtrain their expences under conſiderable ſums a year; the laboring poor, and many ingenious artizans, who cannot poſſibly acquire more than forty or fifty pounds in the ſame time, muſt be liable to ſuffer much diſtreſs either when out of employment, or when viſited with ſickneſs. Temperance and labor render them prolific; and to ſupport a numerous family with all the neceſſaries of life, by their ſmall earnings, is an invincible proof of the economy and induſtry that generally prevail among them.

Sometimes, indeed, by ſucceſſive attacks of illneſs, they are incapable of procuring the common neceſſaries of life; they have literally wanted bread, as well as cloaths; and, inſtead of a bed, an old oil-cloth has been ſubſtituted, and the whole furniture of it has been a worn-out blanket,

blanket, inſufficient to hide what decency requires. On ſuch a couch have been found a huſband, a wife, and two or three children, at once chained by diſeaſe, without any reſources to procure a morſel of bread; they have thus continued, till the payment for their wretched dwellings became due, when this diſmal confinement has been changed for the horrible reſtraint of a priſon, loaded with putridity and poiſon.

It muſt be owned, indeed, that ſuch examples of extreme diſtreſs do not very often occur; they are, however, much more frequent, than is uſually imagined by thoſe, who conſider the amazing ſum which the poor-rates annually amount to, and the various other proviſions calculated to relieve the indigent.

Though I wiſh not to accuſe individuals, yet truth obliges me to ſay, that evils exiſt ſomewhere, which require immediate reformation. I have reaſon to believe, that the ſum annually raiſed, would ſupply all

the neceſſities of the national poor, were it timely and properly applied; and this I can deduce from the conduct of a ſociety, whoſe poor are comfortably ſupported, and their children clothed and educated, and ſet forward in life, with no great expence to the individuals of the community.

But from whatever cauſes the prevailing diſtreſſes of the poor may originate, preſent miſery requires preſent aid; whereby health, which is ſo neceſſary to their ſubſiſtance, will be ſooner reſtored, famine and a priſon avoided, the nation inriched by induſtry, and a hardy race of uſeful members preſerved to the community.

The occaſions of making ourſelves happy by extending relief to the needy, are numberleſs, and would ſeem adapted to diffuſe happineſs more generally among mankind. If affluence and independence could univerſally prevail, the benevolent would not experience the inexpreſſible

pleaſure

pleaſure of relieving the diſtreſſed; neither could there exiſt that grateful ſatisfaction, which modeſt indigence ever feels from well-timed ſuccour. In this city, however, there is no probability that theſe cauſes of mutual pleaſure will ever be removed; but, on the other hand, the affluence of ſome riſes in proportion to the neceſſities of others, whoſe wants ſilently petition for their aſſiſtance.

A little good, properly directed, is often great in it's increaſe; the widow's mite was not beſtowed in vain: no perſon, therefore, ſhould withhold his hand, from the reflection that a little can produce no benefit; but rather be animated to do good, by obſerving that great effects have reſulted from trifling cauſes; that the ſmalleſt ſpring is the ſource of a mighty river which waters numerous provinces; that the loftieſt oak of the foreſt is germinated from an acorn; and that the particle, that ſeems loſt in the ocean, may become a pearl of ineſtimable value.

SECTION V.

Advantages of the Diſpenſary to domeſtic ſervants.

SICKNESS is the lot of humanity; and this uſeful as well as numerous part of the community, who intereſt themſelves in their different departments for the profit and pleaſure of their maſters, have a natural claim upon them for relief, when rendered incapable of labour by the attacks of ſickneſs. The female ſex, in particular, conſtitute the majority of domeſtic ſervants in this city; they have been accuſtomed to the plenty of their maſter's table; and frequently receive indulgencies to which the abject poor have not been uſed: by this, and a continual intercourſe with people of decent manners, they acquire a degree of delicacy of body, as well as ſenſibility of mind, that renders them leſs able to undergo difficulties, or expoſure to the wide world. Many of them who are born with tender frames,

and

and delicate conſtitutions, exert themſelves ſo much in the diſcharge of their duty, as renders them liable to numerous ailments; and unwilling to complain for fear of incommoding a family, or incurring an expence which they themſelves are unable to ſupport, they patiently linger on, till diſeaſe becomes too deeply fixed to be eradicated. I have, indeed, been witneſs to the moſt laudable inſtances of humanity in maſters and miſtreſſes of families, who, as ſoon as they have diſcovered the ſickneſs of their female ſervants, have evinced the tendereſt care of them, engaging the advice of the family phyſician or apothecary, and taking upon themſelves every expence that might accrue: and where ſervants meet with ſuch treatment the aid of the Diſpenſary is not requiſite. In ſome families peculiar circumſtances may occur, and ſervants may be ſeized with certain diſeaſes, particularly of the infectious kind, which may render it highly expedient to remove them to lodgings; but the humane interference of maſters and miſtreſſes may ſtill

be

be conducted with no leſs advantage and ſecurity to ſervants than if they were at home. There are, however, many heads of families, whoſe humanity does not riſe to ſuch complete efforts of genuine compaſſion. The tender domeſtic, whoſe ſickneſs is often occaſioned by an anxious deſire to pleaſe the family, is either left to diſcharge the expences of it, or turned out of the houſe at it's firſt commencement, for no other reaſon, but becauſe ſhe is ſick, and may poſſibly die in the family. If we are made to aſſiſt and to do good to each other in the daily and common occurrences of life, how much more ſhould the tendereſt emotions of ſympathy be excited, and the moſt effectual relief be adminiſtered, in ſuch affecting ſituations? If we ſerve our fellow-creatures ſo far only as it creates us no trouble, where is the prevalence of Chriſtianity over ſelfiſhneſs? The removal to ſtrange lodgings, the ideas of anxiety thence excited, and the numerous fears which are apt, in ſuch a perplexed ſtate, to crowd in upon the mind of an inexperienced

perienced girl, who may have laboured for years without ſaving many ſhillings, all contribute to augment the firſt malady, and protract the cure.

Thus abandoned and out-caſt, what a ſcene of woe do the firſt returns of health exhibit? Perhaps far from her native home, without one real friend, but ſurrounded with many falſe ones of both ſexes, how unexpectedly do the misfortunes of a frail conſtitution, and the neglect of thoſe who ſhould have ſuccoured her in diſtreſs, introduce her into a ſcene of life, to which, however ſhocking, neceſſity compels her to ſubmit at firſt, and habit afterwards reconciles her beyond redemption.

To ſervants, thus dangerouſly ſituated in families, I know that the Diſpenſary has been an uſeful and noble ſuccour. It has induced maſters and miſtreſſes to admit that relief, by which no expence is incurred; and, for the ſame reaſon, has encouraged ſervants to apply early for a cure, before their diſorders were too deeply rooted in the conſtitution. Thus

Thus not only the health but the morals of young people of both ſexes have been preſerved, and that tie betwixt maſters and ſervants which humanity and juſtice have formed, has become firmly ſtrengthened; and, as I have generally obſerved, every kind aſſiſtance that domeſtics receive, is amply repaid by their fidelity, economy, and induſtry.

SECTION VI.

General Diſpenſary as it affects the Faculty at large.

WHERE there are numbers of wealthy citizens, there muſt always exiſt numbers of poor; the elegance and eaſe of the former depend upon the ingenuity and labor of the latter; and the opulent have abundantly teſtified their ſenſe of this connexion, by many coſtly edifices for the reception and relief of the diſeaſed poor. Though this has undoubtedly leſſened the general practice of ſurgeons and apothecaries, it has not leſſened their emoluments, as theſe receptacles are open only to poverty and diſtreſs; it is, therefore, the unprofitable buſineſs only that muſt be deducted from the income of the faculty at large: and, indeed, we find gentlemen of the profeſſion ſo ſenſible of this, that many of them have become benefactors to theſe very inſtitutions. Hence, if hoſpitals do not operate againſt the intereſts of the fa-

culty, the Diſpenſary cannot injure them; becauſe the ſubjects of it's relief are ſuch only as are really neceſſitous; and from ſuch I am ſure the faculty are too generous and independent to demand the mite of hard-earned labor.

The beſt plans have been abuſed, and, probably, individuals in eaſy circumſtances may have aſſumed the appearance of neceſſity, and thereby partaken of that charity which was deſigned only for the indigent; but ſuch inſtances muſt rarely, if ever, occur in the General Diſpenſary, becauſe a committee of the governors attend daily, to prevent impoſitions of this kind, and to rectify every abuſe.

SECTION

SECTION VII.

Utility of admitting Surgery.

A General Diſpenſary for relieving the poor at their own habitations, is but a modern inſtitution, different from every other charity eſtabliſhed in this kingdom; the governors, therefore, acted with greater circumſpection, reſpecting the indiſcriminate admiſſion of patients, during the infancy of ſo novel a plan. Perfection is not the production of a day; it is experience that directs an accurate architect in raiſing a ſtupendous edifice upon a well-laid foundation; and we have now ſufficient ground to decide upon the propriety of admitting chirurgical patients as well as medical. The governors of the WeſtminſterDiſpenſary, emboldened by the ſucceſs of this prior eſtabliſhment in the city of London, from the firſt ventured to adminiſter relief to every malady to which the human frame is liable; and the rapid progreſs of this inſtitution of but the other

day, is a proof of what the elder Charity, with a conſiderable capital in the funds, is now able to accompliſh: it ſhews that chirurgical caſes are not more expenſive than medical; and, more than this, it evinces, that the worſt operations may be conducted at the houſes of the patients with eaſe and with ſucceſs.

We have, indeed, ſeen this happily aſcertained, by the ſucceſs which hath attended ſeveral operations conducted by the ſurgeon to the General Diſpenſary, and ſome of them in capital caſes, without one example of fatality.

There are frequent inſtances of patients laboring under diſeaſes, equally demanding the care of the ſurgeon as well as of the phyſician; and moſt chirurgical caſes require, likewiſe, medical aſſiſtance: a ſtrong plea might hence be formed, for admitting ſuch complicated caſes; and, conſequently, for admitting ſurgery in general.

The

The poor, whoſe circumſtances often compel them to make uſe of the firſt means of aid which ſpecious pretenders offer them, frequently fall victims to ignorance and quackery, and thereby for ever impair their health, to the injury of their families, and and loſs of the community. The Diſpenſary, however, has proved a noble check to impoſtures in phyſic, and nearly extirpated medical quacks out of the precincts of the city; but it's influence has not yet been oppoſed to pretenders in ſurgery, by whom hundreds of our unhappy fellow creatures are annually ſacrificed on Tower-hill and in Moorfields: perſuaded I am, however, from the ſupplications of the poor, that theſe peſts of ſociety would ſoon be compelled to quit the city for want of bread, were chirurgical caſes admitted to partake of the benefits of the Diſpenſary. Ignorance and impudence would then no longer, in the public walks, impoſe upon the unthinking multitude the cures of ſlight ſcrophulas for confirmed cancers, and of ſlight inflammations

flammations of the eyes for the removal of blindneſs; the maladies of the poor would then be timely checked, and effectually eradicated, by the joint efforts of medical and chirurgical experience, and the life of many an uſeful member would be redeemed to the community, their relations, and their friends.

SECTION VIII.

Of conſulting, or extraordinary Phyſicians.

AS the Diſpenſary requires three times as much attendance as the largeſt hoſpital in London, though the ſmaller hoſpitals have double the officers to do the duty of them, it is natural to ſuppoſe, that the labor of each of the Diſpenſary phyſicians muſt be too great to allow them to officiate one for another; and, at the ſame time, their expoſure to infection in viſiting the poor at their own habitations, and frequently the priſoners in the compters, muſt render their health very precarious; hence much inconvenience muſt ariſe, for want of aſſiſtance during the indiſpoſition of any of the phyſicians.

It appears neceſſary, therefore, to appoint conſulting phyſicians, to attend during ſuch exigencies; and likewiſe to conſult with the phyſicians in ordinary upon difficult

difficult and hazardous caſes. They might be choſen out of thoſe phyſicians in ordinary, who are diſpoſed to retire from that laborious ſtation; and the poſt ſhould be merely honorary, and have no ſalary annexed to it. The governors, I dare ſay, will not be under the neceſſity of waiting long before they will have an opportunity of ſhewing their approbation of former ſervices, and, without any additional expence to the charity, thus rewarding thoſe officers who have faithfully diſcharged their duty.

SECTION

SECTION IX.

General Diſpenſary as a School of Phyſic.

NEXT to the ſuccour and relief of the poor, the promotion of medical knowledge is of the utmoſt importance in a medical inſtitution. Unfortunately for ſtudents of phyſic and ſurgery, and for mankind in general, no public plan has been adopted in Europe for conveying inſtruction in imitation of private practice; and hence it is, that young gentlemen of genius and application are ſo much at a loſs at the commencement of their practice. In places wherein a multitude of our ſpecies are confined at one time, diſeaſes in general put on a ſameneſs of appearance, and have all more or leſs a putrid tendency; but a plan like that of the General Diſpenſary, where patients are viſited at their own habitations, affords an opportunity for ſtudents of the healing art to obſerve the varieties in diſeaſes, as they uſually ariſe

in private practice; they will ſee their progreſs and determination more clearly, and learn to diſtinguiſh and treat, more judiciouſly, the ſymptoms they ſhall in future have occaſion to preſcribe for. Were theſe favourable opportunities of information farther improved, by lectures of the phyſicians and ſurgeons, adapted to the reigning diſeaſes and circumſtances of the patients, we need not heſitate to declare, that this inſtitution might be rendered of the utmoſt importance to ſtudents, to the ſcience of medicine, and to the public.

There are many young gentlemen of genius, application, and learning, whoſe finances may have been much impaired in acquiring only the rudiments of medicine; and, therefore, as public good ſhould ever be the motive of conduct with the faculty, the admiſſion to the benefits of the Diſpenſary ſhould be made as eaſy as poſſible to the ſtudents, who, beſides the uſual contingent expences requiſite to acquire

quire medical knowledge, might not deem ten guineas per ann. too large a gratuity for the privilege not only of attending the practice of the phyſicians and ſurgeons, but likewiſe of being admitted, during that term, to all the lectures, and of ſeeing the manner of compounding medicines, and the forms uſed in preſcription.

The phyſicians and ſurgeons might each give a public lecture, once every week, on the following ſubjects :

The phyſician on Mondays,	Clinical lectures on ſuch caſes as the Diſpenſary affords.
The phyſician on Tueſdays,	Theory and practice of medicine.
The phyſician on Wedneſdays,	Materia medica, botany, and chemiſtry.
The ſurgeon on Thurſdays,	Practical lectures on the chirurgical caſes in the Diſpenſary.
The ſurgeon on Fridays, -	Syſtem of ſurgery, including operations in general.
The ſurgeon on Saturdays,	Anatomy, and chirurgical obſervations in general.

This plan, indeed, may not be fully executed for ſome time ; but though we can-

not immediately attain perfection, the nearer we approach towards it the better.

By ſeeing a multitude of caſes in quick ſucceſſion, without reflecting carefully on each, the attention of the ſtudent is often bewildered; and the uſeful impreſſions which one caſe affords, may be effaced by ſudden ſubſequent ones: it is hence of conſequence to digeſt one caſe before the attention is engroſſed by another; and, to this end, the ſtudents ſhould be allowed to viſit the home-patients belonging to the Diſpenſary, on ſuch days as the phyſicians attendance may be diſpenſed with; and ſhould draw up reports of the ſtate of the diſeaſe and the preſent ſymptoms, as well as the indications of cure, and the remedies proper to be adminiſtered: theſe reports ſhould be preſented to the phyſicians under whom the reſpective caſes were admitted, who ſhould aſſign reaſons for confirming or rejecting the opinions of their pupils, and then offer their own more mature judgment upon the ſubject before them.

Every

Every perſon of information is aware of the ſanguine notions and theories which ſtudents acquire by a mere college education: it is a rational practice that muſt confirm ſome of their opinions, and rectify others; that muſt let them perceive that many a diſeaſe, which theory has expelled in a breath, remains obſtinate under the care of the ableſt phyſicians.

Were ſuch a plan adopted, and that it might eaſily be done I know by experience, young gentlemen, at their entrance upon the anxious and arduous taſk of the guardianſhip of life, would not be at a loſs when called to the urgent relief of the ſick, nor be tempted to adopt an unſteady precarious method of treatment; but, having carefully combined a ſyſtem of practical and theoretical knowledge, they would accurately inveſtigate ſymptoms, and apply thoſe remedies that nature and the diſeaſe require.

Though

Though I have mentioned medicine in a particular manner in this place, the ſame plan might be adopted for ſurgery, and ſimilar good effects would undoubtedly reſult.

The faculty belonging to the Diſpenſary have long continued to meet together once a week, to conſult upon all difficult caſes, and to communicate their mutual aſſiſtance to each other: and ſuch conſultations, which tend to check the ſallies of wild fancy, and bring theory to the teſt of experience, muſt prove peculiarly inſtructive to the pupils, who would hear the united obſervations of perſons experienced in practice, ſee the inefficacy of certain remedies in certain diſeaſes, and learn to apply others better adapted to the urgent ſymptoms, or peculiar conſtitution of the patient.

In ſuch a proceſs, ſtudents would find the moſt ample means of perfecting themſelves in the treatment of human maladies; and,

and, while the healing art advanced to maturity, the public muſt neceſſarily reap the benefit, by always meeting with accompliſhed guardians of health, under whoſe protection they might ſafely repoſe that deareſt of temporal bleſſings.

SECTION

SECTION X.

Influence of the Diſpenſary on the Burials in London.

EVERY inſtitution which contributes to the preſervation of health, or the cure of diſeaſe, cannot fail to produce ſome diminution in the bills of mortality; and the General Diſpenſary, which, in the ſpace of five years, has extended it's aſſiſtance to about twelve thouſand diſeaſed perſons, muſt have had a conſiderable ſhare in redeeming victims from the grave, eſpecially as many of them were too abject to purchaſe the relief of medicine, or to procure a friend that had ſufficient influence to open the lofty gates of an hoſpital. Many of their diſeaſes were alſo too violent in their ſymptoms, and too rapid in their progreſs, to wait the ſlow return of the weekly day of admiſſion; or of a tendency improper for reception into one ward, previouſly crowded with numbers of their diſeaſed fellow-creatures.

It has been asserted, that "a third part "of all who die at Paris, die in hospitals. "In the Hotel Dieu, a great hospital si- "tuated in the middle of that city, we "behold a horrid scene of misery; for the "beds being too few for the numbers "admitted, it is common to see four, six, "or even eight patients in a bed together, "lying four at one end, and four at the "other. Above a *fifth* of all who are re- "ceived into this hospital, die; the an- "nual number admitted amounting to "near twenty-two thousand." Vid. Police of France, p. 83. "In the two great hos- "pitals of London, St. Thomas's and St. "Bartholomew's, about six hundred die "annually, or one in *thirteen* of all ad- "mitted as in-patients." Vid. Price on the Expectation of Lives, p. 216. "In the "Northampton Infirmary, *one* in *nineteen* "of the in-patients *(communibus annis)* "die every year; and in that of Man- "chester, which is built in an airy situa- "tion, and tolerably well ventilated, *one* "in *twenty-two*." Percival's Letter to

Aikin on hoſpitals. In the Diſpenſary, the deaths do not amount to *one* in *thirty-three*; which, conſidering the many thouſands of ſick perſons annually admitted to partake of it's relief, muſt contribute not a little to the decreaſe of deaths in this metropolis; and ſo indeed it appears to have done by the bills of mortality, as the diminution in the burials has been nearly progreſſive every year ſince it's eſtabliſhment, except the year 1772, when the ſmall-pox almoſt ſolely conſtituted this difference, upwards of two thouſand dying that year of this diſeaſe more than in the preceding year 1771. And it ſhould be remarked, that ſmall-pox patients were then not admitted to the benefits of the Diſpenſary*.

It is not merely by the relief which the poor have immediately received from

* It muſt be grateful to every benevolent perſon to be informed, that a Diſpenſary for inoculating the poor at their own habitations, is now eſtabliſhed in London.

this

this inſtitution, that this happy diminution of burials in the bills of mortality has been brought about: the uſeful inſtructions which, in every part of London, they have received from the phyſicians who have attended them during their illneſs, have greatly contributed to the preſervation of lives, that might have been ſacrified to ignorance and quackery. In the ſpace of a very few years I have obſerved a total revolution in the conduct of the common people reſpecting their diſeaſed friends; they have learned, that moſt diſeaſes are mitigated by a free admiſſion of air, by cleanlineſs, and by promoting, inſtead of reſtraining, the indulgence and eaſe of the ſick. Such inſtruction was new to the poor, though important to their preſervation; and, when we conſider how late they have acquired this information, we muſt lament that ſo many centuries have elapſed before an inſtitution, like the General Diſpenſary, became the object of public attention.

SECTION XI.

Advantages of Baths.

THOUGH obſtructed perſpiration may not now be conſidered as ſo prolific and general a ſource of diſeaſe as it was formerly, yet there is reaſon to conclude, that many diſeaſes either originate from, or are increaſed by, a diminution of this natural excretion; particularly amongſt the poor, whoſe employments, and want of cleanlineſs, tend to obſtruct the perſpirable veſſels, and thereby induce the diſorders dependent thereon. In ſuch caſes a warm bath muſt prove peculiarly ſerviceable, by cleanſing the ſurface of the body, and reſtoring that perſpiration, by the retention of which the diſeaſe had either been acquired, or conſiderably augmented.

The female poor more eſpecially, by confinement in nurſing, miſmanagement in lyings-in, laborious exertions above their

their ſtrength, poor diet, and other circumſtances of hardſhip, become enfeebled, and acquire complaints wherein the cold bath would prove more ſpeedily beneficial than the continued uſe of internal remedies.

There are likewiſe ſome ſudden and painful diſeaſes, which require the immediate uſe of a tepid bath, and without which the uſual remedies would prove ineffectual and uſeleſs; and it is known, that the grateful warmth of water has ſoon procured that eaſe and relief, which nothing elſe could give.

Amidſt the number of benevolent plans in this metropolis, baths, for the uſe of the poor, have never yet been conſtructed, except in a few hoſpitals, where they are open only to their own patients. The Diſpenſary, therefore, which relieves thouſands, who either cannot get admitted into an hoſpital, or who do not chooſe to leave their habitations and families, muſt remain

main imperfect, till it is furnished both with a warm and a cold bath; the expence of which cannot be considered as burthensome to a Charity, whose finances are daily augmenting, and whose primary design is the good of the poor.

SECTION XII.

Deſcription of the Plan for a new General Diſpenſary.

THE ingenious architects who obligingly preſented me with the annexed plan and elevation of a new Diſpenſary, have likewiſe generouſly intimated a diſpoſition to advance money below the uſual rate of intereſt, were it neceſſary, in order to complete ſuch a ſtructure. If this, however, ſhould not be accepted, there is the utmoſt reaſon to ſuppoſe, that the ſum requiſite for carrying this plan into execution, might ſoon be raiſed by voluntary ſubſcriptions among the opulent and generous inhabitants of this city, who have ſo often teſtified their readineſs to promote the intereſts and welfare of the indigent and diſtreſſed.

GROUND-FLOOR, twelve feet high, to consist of

		Feet	Feet
A	Physicians room - - -	13	by 11
B	Physicians room for patients, including the apothecary's shop,	21	by 14
C	Surgeons room for patients, including the surgery, - -	21	by 14
D	Surgeons room - - - -	13	by 11
E	Staircase - - - - - -	14	by 11
F	Hall - - - - - - -	10 ft.	wide
G	Portico		

The BASEMENT STORY to contain

A kitchen, scullery, beer and coal cellars.

A HOT and COLD BATH.

ONE PAIR STORY, fifteen feet high, to contain

	Feet	Feet
A committee room - - - -	40	by 21
Two rooms behind ditto, each -	13	by 11

TWO PAIR STORY, ten feet high, to contain

Four bedchambers.

FINIS.